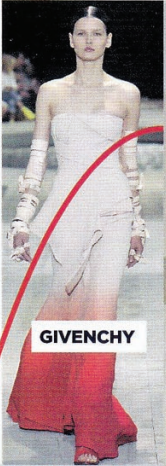


THE CATWALK FILES

EDITED BY HARRIET QUICK



GIVENCHY



ALEXIS MABILLE



ELIE SAAB

autumn '09



GAULTIER PARIS

Dress circle

An exquisite evening gown casts the same magic now as it did 60 years ago

Cecil Beaton captured some full-length masterpieces for *Vogue* at a time when readers still enjoyed majestic balls and galas at the weekend. The mannequins of the era were beauties and society women, such as the Comtesse Alain de la Falaise, photographed here for the January 1950 issue, wearing a Paquin striped fishtail gown. The caption describes the elegance in the sinuous length of the Comtesse's body, "which falls into attitudes of great grace", but notes that she did take some time "to learn how to wear a dress"...

For similarly wondrous dresses in our own time, look to the couture collections. While full skirts and corseted bodices issued forth from Valentino and Dior for autumn '09, the more sinuous lines appeared at Gaultier Paris, Givenchy and Elie Saab, the fishtails swishing gracefully as ever.

GT

1950

